



# Preconception Health

It Takes a Village: Giving Our Babies the Best Chance

# What is Preconception Health?

- It focuses on women and men taking steps now to protect the health of a baby they might have sometime in the future.<sup>1</sup>



# What is Preconception Health?












- It emphasizes a woman being healthy BEFORE she becomes pregnant.<sup>1</sup>
- It promotes the health of women and girls of reproductive age.<sup>1</sup>



# Why is Preconception Health Important?

- Prenatal care starts too late to prevent many of the poor pregnancy outcomes.<sup>2</sup>
- Women who have higher levels of health before pregnancy have healthier outcomes.<sup>3</sup>
- Unhealthy behaviors and certain exposures during the first few weeks of pregnancy can negatively affect the baby's development and pregnancy outcomes.<sup>3</sup>



Conceptus		Embryonic development (weeks)						Fetal period (weeks)			
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	16	20-36	38
											
		Neural									
		Heart									
		Upper limbs									
		Lower limbs									
		Ear									
		Eye									
		Palate									
		Teeth									
		External genitalia									
Loss		Major abnormalities						Functional and Minor abnormalities			



# Why is Preconception Health Important?

- Each mother-to-be has a personal relationship with her *fonua* or *fanua* or land and environment.
- Starting well before pregnancy, even as a young woman, the mother-to-be can have positive exchanges with her *fonua* or *fanua* or land and environment.



# Why is Preconception Health Important?

- Fathers have an important role in caring for the *fonua* or *fanua*, meaning both the land and the placenta.<sup>4</sup>
- Fathers, the family, and the community care for the health of all women, mothers-to-be, and the environment.



# Why is Preconception Health Important?

- Caring for the *fonua* or *fanua* will reciprocate that care so mothers and their bodies are prepared to have the healthiest pregnancy possible for when that time comes.
- When that time does come, mothers are prepared to create their baby's placenta or *fonua* or *fanua* and become its nourishing environment or *fonua* or *fanua*, from which the baby will receive the nourishment needed to sustain life.



# How can I be as healthy as possible BEFORE pregnancy?<sup>5</sup>

- Schedule a preconception health visit
  - Visit your doctor **at least three months before you become pregnant.**
  - This gives you the chance to talk about your plan to get pregnant.



# How can I be as healthy as possible BEFORE pregnancy?<sup>5</sup>

- Know your health history and your family health history
- Be able to give the doctor as much information as possible
  - Past pregnancies, preterm births, miscarriages, etc.
  - Medical conditions and current medications
  - Mental health history
  - Home and workplace environment



# How can I be as healthy as possible BEFORE pregnancy?<sup>5</sup>

- Get to your healthy weight
  - Pacific Islanders have the highest maternal obesity rate in Utah (52.0%).<sup>6</sup>
  - “Being overweight or obese can make it harder to get pregnant and increase your risk of experiencing problems.”<sup>5</sup>



# References

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6. Office of Health Disparities (2015). Health Status by Race and Ethnicity 2015. Salt Lake City, UT: Utah Department of Health.

